

gatekeeper, had been dispatched with a message to the abbot at the Temple of the Queen of Heaven, and the Venerable Grand One, matron of the establishment, was boiling water in the kettle to have it ready for the tea bowls when the visitor should arrive. Of course, he had been interested in the case, even long before Inspector Wallace called to consult with him about it, for there was nothing concerning the welfare of the community, especially in the matter of the administration of justice, that escaped his notice. Disguised as an itinerant seller of books, he had been on several trips to Kowloon, across the harbor, and had chatted with many a tea-house proprietor and with underlings of the magistrate's yamen, and had drawn out from them the general consensus of opinion regarding the green sedan and the mysterious disappearance of Ling Took. Referring to his little leather notebook, he had tabulated the various theories under three separate heads. First, those who believed that he had never been put into the chair at all, that the magistrate had been bribed to release him secretly and that the knife and the bloody paper were all part of a well thought-out plan to deceive the public. Second, those who insisted that the accompanying officer had released him and had bribed or drugged the coolies while on the way from the yamen to the international boundary. Third, those who attributed it all to "tien ming," or "heaven's decree," and believed that the demons of vengeance had spirited him away to the court of Yo Wang, the ruler of hades. Revolving these all over in his mind, he decided to refer them to his venerable friend and counselor the abbot, for no one of them was at all satisfactory to himself, although the inspector and the police had practically settled their minds as to No. 2 and laid the guilt at the door of the officer and the chair carriers, whose sudden departure and flight only served to confirm their decision.

There was a knock at the outer gate, and the voice of old Chang was heard calling, "Open from within!" The abbot entered and the Venerable Grand One received him with due solemnity.

"Is the master within the palace courts?" he asked.

"He awaits your highness' presence

under our cottage roof," was the reply.

Wang Foo at once descended the little stairs, and after the ceremonial tea and pipes they mounted together to "the hall of quiet meditation," which was one of the euphonious titles of the Confucian scholar's study.

"Well, what progress have we made?" began the ecclesiastic.

"Here are the three lines of public opinion," replied the host, as he handed over the note book with his comments.

The visitor drew out from his sleeve an ancient spectacle case of shark-skin and, slowly opening a pair of crystal goggles, adjusted them to his eyes. He read slowly and carefully and then said, as he laid the book upon the table: "No one of these is correct. No one of them satisfies my mind. There is something underneath all this which neither the public nor the police know anything about. You noticed the red cord which was tied about the knife handle? How many brass cash did it have upon it?"

"Exactly five."

"You have here the upper curtain of the sedan, have you not?"

"Yes, I borrowed it from the police yesterday, as you requested."

"Good! Let me examine it carefully. You notice the small cash embroidered in the corners? They are also exactly five. Now look very carefully at the red seal in the center of the paper through which the knife was plunged. Do you not see the dim outline of five separate cash?"

Wang Foo looked up and his eyes met the abbot's. He knew from his tone that they were on the eve of a great discovery. "Speak on, speak on, venerable father," he cried in his eagerness; "tell me, I pray you, what secret is in your mind."

The abbot hesitated a moment and glanced around the room. "We are safe here?"

"Absolutely so."

"Close the window and draw the curtain, for we know not where human eyes and ears may lurk."

He took a brush and, dipping it in the ink, traced upon the paper before them the Chinese character for "cash." He divided the two halves apart with another brush of red, and as he did so said: "It is KO, the same sound as brother, the meaning

is clear. It is the secret order of the Five KO's or brothers, and the five cash constitute their mystic sign. This whole thing is the work of the brotherhood, and it only remains for us to find out exactly who are in it and why they released Ling Took."

"You believe, then, that the sedan is the special property of the brotherhood and is used for their secret meetings?"

"Most certainly I do. It is used to carry the trusted ones to the place of meeting, and there is some way by which they can enter and leave it without detection; and," he added with especial emphasis, "it was by that way that Ling Took escaped. Go to headquarters tomorrow and examine the base of the chair, and especially the floor boards, and report to me in the evening at the temple."

It was late in the evening of the following day when Wang Foo entered the abbot's private apartment and reported to him the results of his investigation. He had found that instead of being securely nailed on as usual the entire floor boards were in a solid frame, and that on releasing two wooden pins, which could be easily pushed out with the hand, the entire inner chair could be removed without touching the rest of the sedan. He explained it all carefully to his host.

"Exactly what I supposed. So if the sedan were placed over a trapdoor the chair and its occupant could slip through it without disturbing even the curtains, could they not?"

"Venerable father, it is as you say."

The abbot went on: "Now, somewhere between the magistrate's yamen and the Bridge of the Silver Cloud that sedan was stopped, and"—he added most significantly with a gesture of his uplifted hand—"the chair and its contents went down through the trap. The prisoner was then unbound, the knife and the paper plunged through the cushion and the chair returned to its place again before the bearers moved on! Do you see it now?"

"Venerable sagacious one, I do."

"We need only one link more in the chain. We must find the exact house in front of which the bearers rested with their burden. We must mark the spot carefully, for it will not only give us the clue to the Ah Sam murder case, but—which is of far greater importance to our country—it will en-

able us to reveal to the viceroy the much-looked-for secret meeting place of those dangerous insurrectionists, the Brotherhood of the Five Brass Cash."

Within less than ten days from the meeting of Wang Foo and the Abbot the viceregal authorities at Canton had accomplished the unearthing of the headquarters of the rebels, and the ringleaders were safely lodged in the provincial prison. A careful investigation revealed the following facts:

First—The sedan had stopped for the usual ten-minute "tea and smoke" in front of the "Rest House of the Heavenly Genii," not a hundred yards from the old city gate of Kowloon. When the bearers put it down the poles just touched the edge of the resthouse sign, the front coolie indicating the place very carefully. This brought the base of it directly over the trapdoor in the sidewalk, which was made of a heavy piece of timber swinging on an oiled pair of hinges. This coolie was a member of the brotherhood, and had been carefully instructed by his superior officer in the band, who was none other than the magistrate's secretary; the other coolies were entirely innocent.

Second—Ling Took was taken down through the trap, released and sworn in as a member of the brotherhood as a reward for his safety, and the bloody knife and paper plunged through the seat cushion in the chair, which was then pushed upward and fastened in its place. Being an official chair, it was very heavy and the difference in weight was not noticed by the bearers.

Third—The magistrate acted in good faith and was entirely innocent. The secretary, himself an important officer of the secret brotherhood, suggested the use of the official chair, having been bribed by the relatives of the prisoner to secure his release in some way. He was accustomed to attend the weekly meetings of the order by being carried to this spot in the sedan, and after entering the trap to substitute another person in the chair, who was then carried by the unsuspecting coolies to the ferry boat and continued on his way to Hongkong for the night, returning the same way before daylight in the morning. The uniforms being identical, the Chinese official hat was pulled down over his eyes and a pair of

large horn goggles prevented the coolies from recognizing any difference in the face. Of course, he never spoke to them, so there was no danger of detection from the voice, all directions as to time, etc., having been given before leaving the yamen.

"But what actually became of Ah Sam?" inquired Inspector Wallace of Wang Foo, when the latter had completed his final denouement in the office at headquarters. "Did Ling Took actually murder him or was he drowned in the harbor?"

"Neither," replied the detective, "the two knives and the paper hearts were merely threats to keep him away from the colony. They frequently scare each other out of a town that way."

"Well, where is he now? Has he ever turned up?"

"Just now," replied the Man of Mystery, as he glanced at his watch—"just now it is 12:45, and I imagine he is engaged in the peaceful occupation of passing the soup in the dining room of the Shanghai Hotel, for," he added with a smile, "that is where he is now serving as the number-two boy."

"And what of Ling Took? Will he slip out of their hands as he did out of ours? They caught him when they raided the den, didn't they?"

"No, he happened to be away on the day that they seized the others, and none of the brotherhood would divulge his whereabouts."

"Well, where do you yourself think he is? He surely wouldn't go back to the oil shop again, would he? What do you think has become of him?"

"I might answer that question very appropriately in the words of the classics, Mr. Wallace. Do you recall what Confucius said to the great Tze Loo when he asked him where the old cook had gone? It is written in one of the last chapters of the Analects."

"I am afraid, Mr. Wang," replied the inspector, "that my recollection of those old philosophers is a trifle rusty. What was it the old sage said?"

"Why, simply this: The lord of the kitchen, who had killed the fowls and dressed the millet and feasted the disciples, had mysteriously disappeared and Tze Loo asked the master where he thought he had gone, and the master merely replied in his terse and dignified way, 'Yin Chik.' He is hiding!"

(Copyright, 1919, by McClure Syndicate.)

## THE LETTERS OF PATRIOTIC POLLY, A WAR WORKER

**DEAREST DADDY:** I'll wager that George Washington, the Pilgrim Fathers, Abraham Lincoln and all the brave Americans of the past wished last night that they were back on the Avenue to help celebrate peace.

Wasn't it glorious?

I can work now ten times harder for knowing that the world is really upside up again. The thought of it stays back in my mind and illuminates everything as the sunset does the sky. Every letter I read I think: "Oh, how happy you are today; your soldier can come home now." I suppose you are doing the same by me, but you must not expect me on the first train—that would be acting a quitter's part. These allottees must get their affairs straightened out and I am sure that the war risk will last three months longer.

How did you celebrate? Ours was not as spontaneous last night as it was the afternoon we got the unconfirmed rumor, but it was more thorough. The Avenue was packed; I believe, dad, that every square inch of it was covered with shoe leather.

Nan and I went down to add our bit and we found the jolliest best-natured people with us. Everybody had left all their grown-upness at home. Old ladies waved flags with their eyes as bright as their granddaughters; old men blew little whistles and rattled cow-bells; the younger generations did all of these things and threw in for good measure about ten kilowatts of lung power. In the dictionary of deeds, daddy, last night was the antonym of that moment in the lives of all of us when we first realized what war meant and our other troubles sank into insignificance beside the realization. That was the way it appeared to Nan and me as we pushed our way through the crowd. Nan, however, soon got tired of it, for it took us thirty minutes to go from 14th street to 13th. She despised having whistles blown in her ears and confetti thrown in her mouth, and she just naturally hates being shoved. She clung to me like a scared kitten, but I was enjoying it. I was thinking how much joy there was in the world then, and I did not even feel the pushing, because every way I looked I saw in people's eyes the same warm, glorious happiness that I was feeling.

We were on the outside of the walk at the corner of 12th and the Avenue when a big Army truck passed us loaded with soldiers and girls. Among them we recognized several



I NEVER GET ANY THRILLS WHEN I AM OUT WITH HIM.

from our former boarding house. We each waved wildly—for whenever we saw any one we knew we each acted rather hoodlumed—and they motioned for us to go up a side street and they would get us. We did and some of the boys helped us up. Then they had to make a long detour down E street to the Capitol in order to get back on the Avenue. But once on it we became a living part of the mad, happy, cheering crowd that moved slowly up and down the wide street.

As long as I live I shall never forget, dad, those three hours spent high up on the Army truck. I knew neither the name of the girl next to me nor that of the boy on the other side, who spoke with an accent that was probably Greek, but it made no difference.

It was midnight before the ranks seemed any thinner. Nan and I finally slipped off and caught a car for home. Tonight I am very tired, as a result of it all, and I am glad I can stay at home and talk to you a while.

But we do not stay at home very much more than we used to do. For one thing, there are so many plays and concerts coming to Washington, and Nan and I act as eager after them as if we were expecting any time to be marooned in the middle of

the Pacific. When we do not get dates we spend 55 cents and sit in the gallery—the "war workers' box." We would feel disgraced at home if we had to do such a thing, but somehow it seems that every girl who comes to Washington drops all her former ideas of social etiquette. Nan says it is not a social problem, but an economical one: the change is due to the check for \$45.83 which most of us draw on the 15th and 13th. All the girls try to live within their salary, either because they have to or because they are ashamed not to. So many succeed that it is humiliating for me to confess that you have sent me money.

But, dad, I don't see how they do. Today I got tickets for "The Follies"—it was too important a show to risk being asked to see and the kind that gallery seats will not do for—so I had to pay \$4.50 for our seats. And it left me with only \$1.75 to last until pay day, three days off. Nan has \$10 left, and has paid off her bond, too. I cannot imagine how she saves, although I watch like a detective for pointers. She says that a year's experience teaching school and then being dependent on one's self will make any girl come out even with her bank account. Of course, she is not buying furs and she does up her own georgette blouses, but, dad

when I come home I want something to show for my year's work up here. I did not pay for my bond this time. I have nothing to spend my next check for except \$20 to Mrs. Motherheart, so I shall pay \$10 to the bank from that and \$5 on my furs—I had forgotten them. The rest will go quickly enough for dinners, shows, church nickels, car fare and stamps, and—it seems that there is something else—oh, yes, laundry and candy. You must not think that this is a politely veiled dun, daddy dear. I positively refuse to accept any more money from you.

We have invented a very clever way to save, although it is not such an original idea in this city. We have offered ourselves up as victims on the "altar of the dinner invitation." You see, we began to get so many invitations out to dinner that we stopped getting ours regularly at the house, because that was paying for something we did not eat. The first of the month we resolved that we would accept every dinner invitation we received and put away that day 75 cents in the bank, which was as much as the man saved for us, although we spent more than that of his money. We each have cunning, little banks: I bought them and gave Nan's to her because she wanted me to get cheap little iron ones. These harmonized so with the furnishings of the room that I could not resist the \$3 that they cost.

After we had those banks for ten days no one asked us out to anything except shows, and I was wanting to hide them from sight when my colonel appeared. He is bald-headed, but a bachelor, which is more than you can say for most of them. I never get any thrills when I am out with him, but he says that he hates to eat alone, and I think that after he gets accustomed to me he might take out both of us. These people here know him, so he is all right, dad. Only I am not sure that I would go with him much if it was not that I had to save some money somewhere.

Maybe you are wondering about Nan's dinner engagements. I have intended to tell you about her sergeant, but I have never had time for any one except Polly in my last letters. I call him Nan's sergeant as a title of respect. You see, if he was a captain I would say Nan's captain, so why not Nan's sergeant?

It began with the time the girls went to Camp Quantico, the time the influenza began with me, if you remember. Nan's sergeant was a tall,

quiet fellow over draft age, who had given up a nice, fat salary as mining engineer somewhere in the wilds of Mexico and enlisted out of pure patriotism. He came to the door of the hut and watched the dancers a while; he did not dance himself. Then he saw Allie and he thought that she was the prettiest little thing that he ever laid his eyes on. He edged around the crowd and finally found courage enough to ask her to sit out the next dance with him. Allie had promised it, and she was not impressed with him enough to give him much encouragement. Nan, standing by, saw him turn away in disappointment, and, not realizing what she was doing, she began to say nice things to him to make him feel good. Nan just loves for other people to be happy, and she says that her greatest temptation is to keep from telling stories to make people feel good. She had the sergeant, pretty soon, sitting down by her and was promising to arrange a date for him with Allie if he would let her know when he could get off and come to town. Man-fashion, he did not see how different Nan was from most girls then, but he went on worshipping Allie and just barely appreciating what Nan was doing for him.

Soon after that Camp Quantico was quarantined.

When, at last, a letter did come from him, stating that he was coming to see Allie, unless written not to, it reached Nan on the afternoon of the evening on which he was to arrive, delayed from being forwarded. Nan rushed over to our old boarding house to meet him. He guessed what she had to tell him as soon as he saw her, and, poor boy, it seemed to hurt him as much as if he had really known Allie.

That is the preface to the story of Nan's sergeant.

Chapter number one begins with his taking Nan out to the dinner and show he had planned for the little New Orleans girl, and he entertained her by telling her that Allie was the living image of his dream girl and that he had dared to hope for something more than friendship. He could not have interested Nan more, and she listened to him so attentively (and did not once tell him that his thoughts were those of every man who saw Allie) that when he told her good-bye he asked if he might come again.

Isn't that enough to make an optimist out of any man?

(Continued on Tenth Page.)